

Princess Little Game

The city-state of Xerol rose from the desert like a scar of gold and sandstone carved into the flesh of the earth itself, sitting at the crossroads where three great trade routes converged like the threads of some vast and ancient loom. Its towers reached upward in pale columns against the relentless blue of the sky, their domed rooftops catching the midday sun until they burned like fallen stars, and below them the bazaar streets writhed with the endless tide of commerce that flowed from dawn until long past dusk, a river of voices and coin and incense that never truly slept. The markets held the wealth of the world in their stalls: silks from the eastern kingdoms that shimmered like water caught in fabric, spices from the southern lands that stung the nose and warmed the blood, iron and glass from the coastal cities that rang like bells when handled, and rarer things still, things pulled from the buried ruins that slept beneath the deep desert, artifacts of forgotten peoples whose names had been swallowed by the sand centuries ago.

Wealth had made Xerol powerful, but it was the steady hand of its rulers that had made it stable, for power without stability is like a fire left to burn without a hearth, bright and terrible and brief. The king and queen had governed the city-state for two decades, their reign carved into the bones of the kingdom like water carving stone, slow and patient and unrelenting. The king was a broad, sun-darkened man who had led caravans across the burning wastes himself before the crown found his head, and he understood trade the way a smith understands iron, not as a thing of abstract value but as something real that could be shaped and bent and made useful. The queen was sharper, a blade where the king was a hammer, a woman whose political cunning had forged alliances with half the neighboring city-states through a careful mixture of marriage arrangements and trade pacts and the occasional well-placed threat whispered into the right ear at the right time. Together they had taken Xerol from a wealthy waypoint, a place where merchants stopped to rest and water their animals, and turned it into a seat of real power, a throne that other rulers looked to with wary respect.

They had one child. A daughter. Princess Xerona.

Every week's end the king and queen rode out, leaving the castle behind them like a shed skin, spending two days making the circuit of nearby villages to check on crops and hear grievances and remind the outer reaches of the kingdom that the throne had not forgotten them. It was routine. It was predictable. And Xerona had made it her own, the way a flower grows through a crack in stone, finding the opening and filling it.

The game was her invention, born sometime in the long restless hours of a kingdom run by parents who treated her more like a political asset than a daughter, a piece on a board to be moved when the time was right. Sometime after her parents departed, Xerona would strip bare and bind herself in a room somewhere in the castle, any room, a storage chamber or an empty guest suite or the old library that nobody visited anymore, where the dust lay thick on the shelves and the silence was the kind that pressed against your ears. She would tie herself up and wait. Her handmaidens knew the rules, for she had explained them with the casual precision of someone describing a game of cards rather than a game of flesh and rope. They had until sundown to find her. The one who did could do whatever she wanted with the princess for the next twenty-four hours. Whatever she wanted.

It had started as a whim, a spark thrown off from the flint of boredom, but it had become tradition, the way all things do when they are repeated enough times to lose their strangeness and become ritual. The handmaidens took turns by rotation, each one getting her week, and they searched the castle room by room and corridor by corridor while Xerona sat in the dark, bound and naked, listening for footsteps and wondering who would open the door.

Late evening. Xerona lay on her bed, naked, staring at the ceiling, where the stone walls of her chamber held the last of the day's heat the way a cup holds wine, slowly releasing it into the cooling air. A single oil lamp flickered on the side table, its flame throwing soft amber light across her skin so that she seemed to glow, a small dark star burning in the dim room.

She was small, short even for a woman of the southern kingdoms, with a frame that made her look delicate until you noticed the curves beneath the surface the way you notice the current beneath still water. Brown skin, smooth and warm-toned, catching the lamplight like polished cedar, the kind of skin that made you think of honey and summer and long afternoons. Her face was sweet, round cheeks and a small nose and full lips that rested in a half-smile even when she was lost in thought, the kind of face that made people underestimate her, that made them look once and decide she was harmless, which was exactly the way she wanted it.

Her body was feminine in a way that defied her stature, the fullness of it almost a contradiction against her small frame, as if nature had decided to compress all the softness and curve of a larger woman into a smaller space. Round, full breasts, a firm C cup that sat high on her chest, nipples dark against her brown skin like coins pressed into warm clay. Her waist curved in, then flared out to hips that held a firm, bouncing ass, the kind that moved when she walked and kept moving after she stopped. She rolled onto her side and the motion sent a ripple through it, and she caught her reflection in the standing mirror across the room and smirked at herself, a private joke between a princess and her own image.

Her hair was black, shoulder-length, worn in straight dreadlocks that fanned across the pillow when she lay back, each one a thin dark rope against the white linen. She ran a hand through them lazily, feeling the weight of them between her fingers, the texture of them, the way they moved like living things.

She was killing time. Relaxing. The game would begin soon enough.

Xerona swung her legs off the bed and stood, the stone floor cool under her bare feet like a whisper of the desert night that had already begun to seep through the walls. She walked to the window and looked out over Xerol, her city, her cage, her kingdom.

The city never fully slept, even now in the late evening, the bazaar district still glowing with lantern light like a constellation fallen to earth, and she could hear the distant hum of it, voices and music blurred by distance into a single low murmur that rose and fell like breathing. Sandstone rooftops stretched out below her, domed and flat, punctuated by the occasional tower that rose above its neighbors, and beyond the city walls the desert was a black void under a sky thick with stars, the kind of sky that made you feel small and brief and unimportant. A warm breeze pushed through the window opening and brushed across her naked skin like a hand that wanted something.

She lingered for a moment, letting the night look at her, then turned away. Time to move.

She crossed the chamber to the wardrobe, a tall piece of dark wood carved with geometric patterns that seemed to shift in the lamplight, turning from abstract shapes into almost-figures and back again, the kind of carving that looked different every time you glanced at it. She pulled the doors open and the lamp light reached inside, catching the colors of her collection like a sunrise breaking into a hidden valley.

Togas first, hanging in a row, semi-transparent, in whites and pale golds and soft pinks, the fabric so thin that the shape of her body would show through it like a body seen through shallow water, dark nipples visible beneath the folds. She ran her fingers along them, feeling the silk slide across her skin. Heeled sandals lined the bottom shelf, leather straps in various colors coiled like sleeping snakes. On the upper shelf a small box held her thong panties, rolled and sorted, barely more than string and a triangle of cloth, the kind of thing that covered everything and nothing at once. Beside it a smaller box with nipple stamps, thin metal pieces meant to press over her nipples and stay in place, decorative and functional, little ornaments for a body that was already its own ornament.

She stood there, naked in the open wardrobe's light, tapping a finger against her thigh, thinking.

She reached past the togas and pulled out a robe. White linen with gold thread tracing the edges, simple in cut, nothing like the elaborate formal wear her mother preferred for court functions where the point was to impress rather than to reveal. She slipped it on and the fabric settled against her skin, light and cool, like being dressed in morning mist. It ended at mid-thigh, leaving her legs bare from there down.

She pulled the two sides together at her waist and tied them in a small bow, the cinch pulling the fabric tight across her chest, pressing it up and together, creating a deep line of cleavage that ran from the bow to the collar like a valley carved between two soft hills. The robe was thin enough that the dark circles of her nipples still showed faintly through the white linen, shadows beneath the surface, but the bow held everything in place.

She turned to the mirror. Looked herself over. The gold accents caught the lamplight. The hem sat high on her thighs. The bow was neat. The cleavage was deep.

She stepped into the corridor and pulled the door shut behind her, the lock clicking like a small bone breaking, and she tucked the key into a small pocket hidden in the robe's fold. The hallway was empty, torchlight from the wall sconces flickering across the stone like light playing on water, and her bare feet made soft sounds on the floor as she walked, each step a small whisper that the walls swallowed.

The dungeon was two levels below, reached by the back staircase that the servants used, narrow and steep, a spine of stone descending into the cooler dark. The air grew cooler as she went down, the heat of the day falling away behind her like a shed cloak, and the castle slept around her, deeply and completely, the way only a castle with no prisoners and no threats can sleep. No guards this deep. No reason for them. The dungeon hadn't held a prisoner in over a year, its cells standing empty and patient, waiting for someone worth locking up.

She pushed the heavy door open and stepped inside. The room was large, vaulted, lit by a single torch left burning in a wall bracket, its flame steady and orange, casting shadows that moved like slow liquid across the stone. Stone walls, stone floor, iron fixtures, the smell of old dust and dry air and the faint metallic tang of things that had once been used on human bodies. She moved along the wall, checking hooks and shelves, her fingers reading the surfaces the way a blind person reads text. Coils of chain. Shackles. A box of iron cuffs. Then she found what she was looking for, a length of rope, thick and rough, hanging from a hook near the far wall like a sleeping snake, and she pulled it down and tested it in her hands. Strong enough.

She turned to leave, then stopped.

The rack sat in the center of the room, and she had walked past it without noticing, the way you walk past a familiar thing a hundred times until suddenly one day you see it, really see it, and wonder how you never noticed it before. Old wood, dark with age and use, the color of something that had been touched by many hands over many years. It was angled, not flat, the far end raised higher than the near end, so that anyone lying on it would have their hips arched upward, pushed out and presented, the body made into an offering. No leather straps. Just smooth wood and a crank at the raised end, a mechanism for changing the angle, for making the arch deeper or shallower. She had seen it before, years ago, when her father had shown her the dungeon as a child to teach her about the consequences of crime, pointing to the rack and the chains and the iron box with the calm voice of a man explaining the tools of his trade. She had thought it ugly then. Now she looked at it differently, the way a person looks at a word they have read a thousand times and suddenly understands it for the first time.

She ran her fingers along the wooden edge, the surface smooth and worn, almost warm, the kind of smoothness that comes from years of use, from hands and bodies pressing against it. The crank turned freely when she tested it, the wood moving without sound, well-oiled despite the age.

She looked at the rope in her hand. Then back at the rack.

She stood there for a long moment, the rope in one hand, the rack in front of her, the torch crackling on the wall like a slow heartbeat. She could turn around. Go back upstairs. Pick a storage room or a guest chamber like she always did, tie herself up in a corner somewhere and wait for a handmaiden to find her, safe and routine and predictable. She could do that.

She looked at the rack again.

Her fingers went to the bow at her waist and she pulled one end, the knot slipping like a secret given away, and the robe loosened, then fell open. She shrugged it off her shoulders and let it drop to the stone floor, where it pooled around her feet in a circle of white and gold like a shed skin, like the ghost of the girl who had been wearing it. She stood naked in the dungeon, holding the rope, the torchlight playing across her brown skin, and she felt the cool air touch every part of her at once.

She stepped out of the robe and walked to the rack, placing one hand on the wood and lifting herself up, sitting on the edge, the surface cool against her bare skin, smooth as river stone. She shifted her weight, then swung her legs up and lay back.

The angle hit her immediately, the way a wave hits you when you are not ready for it. Her upper body rested lower, her hips raised higher, the arch pushing her pelvis up and out, her ass lifted slightly off the wood, her thighs parted naturally by the slope like the petals of a flower opening. She felt exposed, more exposed than she had planned, more exposed than she had ever felt in any of the rooms she had used before, because this position did not just leave her naked, it displayed her, it offered her, it made her body into something that was meant to be looked at and touched and used. She lay there for a moment, breathing, feeling the wood beneath her back, the air on her skin, the way the position made her feel like she had been unwrapped and laid out for someone else's hunger.

She liked it.

She sat up and swung her legs down, cutting a length of rope with the small knife she had tucked in the robe's pocket, now lying on the floor beside the discarded garment like a tool left beside a body. She tied one end to the lower frame of the rack, then fashioned a slip knot at the other end, the kind of knot that tightens when pulled and loosens when the free end is tugged, and she looped it around her right ankle and pulled. The rope gripped. She did the same for her left ankle, tying off the second length to the opposite side, and she felt the bindings hold her legs apart, fixed and firm.

She lay back. Her legs were spread, ankles fixed to the frame, the angle of the rack still pushing her hips up, and she pulled against the bindings, testing them the way you test the edge of a cliff with your foot. They held. The rope bit slightly into her skin, a small sharp pain that was not quite pain, and she flexed her feet, twisted her legs. No give. The feeling sent a slow heat through her stomach, a warmth that spread downward.

She liked that too much.

She cut another length, tied one end to the upper frame near the crank, fashioned a slip knot, and slid her right wrist through the loop, pulling the free end with her left hand. The loop tightened around her wrist like a mouth closing. She tugged. It held firm. Her heart was beating faster now, a drum in her chest, and she knew she could still undo this, could pull the free end and loosen the knot and go back to her room and pretend this night had been like every other night. One hand free. One hand tied. The choice still hers.

She didn't.

She fashioned the second slip knot with her tied hand and her teeth, awkward and clumsy, the rope slipping twice before she could hold it, and it took three tries before the loop was right. She slid her left wrist through and pulled the trailing end with her teeth until the loop cinched tight, the rope biting into her skin, and then both hands were bound, both wrists fixed, and the choice was no longer hers.

Both wrists bound. Both ankles bound. Naked, arched, spread on the rack in the dungeon below the sleeping castle, and the sleeping castle did not know, and the sleeping castle did not care.

She pulled against everything at once, her body straining against the ropes the way a bird strains against a cage, and the ropes held, and she couldn't move, and the position stretched her and arched her and left her completely open, and her breathing was fast and her skin was hot and she let her head fall back against the wood and felt the grain of it against her skull.

She loved it.

Minutes passed. The torch crackled. Xerona lay still, breathing slow, testing the ropes every now and then, pulling gently the way a dreamer pulls at the edge of sleep. The dungeon was quiet. She could hear her own heartbeat, steady and deep, and the small sounds of the castle settling above her, the creaks and sighs of old stone cooling in the night.

Then footsteps.

She froze. The sound came from the staircase, soft and light, not the heavy tread of a guard but something smaller, something careful, someone who did not want to be heard. The door creaked open like a question asked in the dark.

A figure stepped in. Slim. Pointed ears poking through tousled auburn hair like leaves through fallen snow. An elf girl, Xerona's age, maybe a year younger, wearing a kitchen dress that was plain and flour-dusted, the kind of dress that told you everything about a person's place in the world without needing to say a word. She held a small candle in one hand, the flame trembling, and she took two steps into the room, then stopped dead, the way a person stops when they walk in on something they were not meant to see.

Olivia.

Her eyes went wide. The candle trembled in her hand, the flame jumping and dancing, and she stared, her mouth opening and closing without sound, a fish pulled from water into air. Xerona lay naked on the rack, wrists and ankles bound, body arched and spread, brown skin gleaming in the torchlight, and the elf girl's cheeks flushed pink under her freckles, the color rising like a tide.

"Princess Xerona?" - Her voice was barely above a whisper, a sound that barely dared to exist. "What... what are you doing?"

Xerona lifted her head just enough to look at her. She didn't flinch. Didn't blush. She smiled, the slow smile of a cat that has been found in a room it was not supposed to enter.

"Olivia. Nice of you to visit." - She said.

"But you're... you're..." - Olivia's eyes kept moving across her body, then snapping away, then coming back, drawn by something stronger than her will to look away. "You're tied up. You're naked. Why are you... is this... did someone do this to you?"

"No one did this to me. I did this to myself." - Xerona said.

"You... what?" - Olivia took a half step closer, then stopped, unsure, her body making a decision her mind had not yet agreed to. "But why? How? Should I... should I untie you? I can go get someone, I can..."

"No." - Xerona said.

Olivia blinked. "No?"

"I'm fine where I am." - She said.

"But Princess, you can't just... you're in the dungeon. Naked. Tied to a... what is this thing?" - Olivia asked.

"It's a rack." - Xerona said.

"I know what it is, but why are you on it?" - Olivia asked.

Xerona tilted her head, looking at the elf girl with an expression that was half amusement and half something else. "Why are you in the dungeon at this hour, Olivia?" - She asked.

Olivia's blush deepened, the pink spreading from her cheeks to her ears, the tips of them going red beneath the auburn hair. "I... I was looking for... the cooks send me down sometimes. For the old wine stores. There's a shelf in the back..." - She said.

"Uh huh." - Xerona said.

"I'm telling the truth!" - Olivia said.

"I believe you." - Xerona said.

Olivia stood there, the candle shaking in her hand, her eyes unable to settle on any one point, sliding across Xerona's body and then forcing themselves to the wall and then losing the fight and coming back, pulled by a gravity she did not want to name.

"So," - Xerona said, her voice lazy and warm, "are you going to stand there all night, or did you want something?"

Olivia took a few steps closer, and her candle steadied, and something shifted behind her eyes like a curtain being pulled aside to reveal a window that had been there all along. The nervous girl who had stumbled through the door was still there, but another version of her was rising up underneath, the way water rises beneath ice, and her chin lifted and her shoulders squared and the trembling in her hand went still.

"So you do this to yourself," - She said slowly, her voice finding a new register, lower and more certain. "Tie yourself up. Down here. In the dungeon. Alone. Naked." - She said.

"You already said that." - Xerona said.

"And nobody knows you're here." - Olivia said.

"The handmaidens know." - Xerona said.

"They're not here, are they?" - Olivia took another step, her bare feet quiet on the stone. "I found you. Not them." - She said.

Xerona's smile flickered, the first crack in the mask. "You're a kitchen girl, Olivia. Go fetch your wine and forget what you saw." - She said.

"No." - Olivia said.

"No?" - Xerona said.

Olivia took another step. She was close now, near the foot of the rack, near Xerona's bound ankles, and the candlelight played across her face, catching the green in her eyes and making them glow like emeralds held up to fire. Her blush was still there but her expression had changed, softer and hungrier, the face of someone who has wanted something for a long time and has just realized that the thing is within reach.

"I've watched you for months, Princess. In the halls. At meals. You never looked at me. Not once. And now here you are. Tied up. Can't move. Can't run. Can't tell me to leave." - Olivia said.

"I just told you to leave." - Xerona said.

"And you didn't mean it." - Olivia's voice dropped, the words falling like stones into still water. "If you wanted me gone, you'd have screamed. You'd have called for the guards. You'd have done anything other than lie there smiling at me." - She said.

Xerona opened her mouth. Closed it. The silence was louder than any words.

Olivia stood at her feet now, looking down at her, and the image was strange and wrong and thrilling all at once: the princess of Xerol, naked and bound on a dungeon rack, and a kitchen girl standing over her, flour still dusting her dress. The candle trembled again, but this time it wasn't fear.

"What do you want, Olivia?" - Xerona asked, and her voice was quieter now, the cockiness still there but thinner, like ice in spring.

The elf girl didn't answer right away. She just looked, taking her time, letting her eyes travel the length of Xerona's body the way a hand would if it could, from the bound wrists to the arched stomach to the spread thighs to the place between them that the torchlight could not quite reach.

Olivia set the candle down on a small table beside the rack, a table Xerona hadn't noticed before, iron and wood, low to the ground, lined with a row of old tools that lay there like sleeping instruments waiting for someone to pick them up. Pinchers. A wooden rod. A leather strap. A feather on a stick. Things meant for pain, or something close to it, or something that lived in the space between pain and pleasure where the body can no longer tell the difference.

Olivia smirked down at her, and the smirk was a new thing on her face, a expression that fit her like a new dress, as if she had been wearing the wrong face all night and had only now found the right one.

Then she reached out with two fingers of her left hand and touched Xerona's left foot, the inner side, just below the ankle, and the touch was slow and gentle, a whisper made into a physical thing.

Xerona's whole body tensed, a shiver running from her foot up her calf and her thigh and her spine like a flame climbing a wick, and she bit her lip hard and her toes curled and the ropes creaked as she pulled against them, her body trying to escape a touch that was too light to escape.

"Don't." - She said.

Olivia didn't stop. Her fingers traced a small circle on the soft skin, slow and patient.

"I said don't." - Xerona's voice was sharper now, the voice of a princess who has never had to repeat herself. "I am the princess of Xerol. You are a kitchen girl. Take your hands off me or I'll have you thrown in the cells." - She said.

"Will you?" - Olivia's fingers moved a little higher, slow and soft, tracing the arch of the foot. "You can't move, Princess. You can't call anyone. You can't do anything except lie there and feel it." - She said.

"I'm warning you." - Xerona said.

"Warning me." - Olivia smiled, and the smile was gentle and cruel at the same time, the way a cat's smile is. "That's cute." - She said.

Her fingers brushed along the arch of the foot and Xerona's leg twitched, pulling against the ankle binding, the rope holding firm, and her jaw tightened because she would not give this girl the satisfaction of seeing her react.

"You know," - Olivia said softly, her voice dropping into something intimate and private, "I used to dream about touching you. Just once. Your hand. Your shoulder. Anything." - Her fingers traced back down to the ankle. "I never imagined this." - She said.

"Olivia. Stop. Now." - Xerona said.

"No." - Olivia said.

Olivia's fingers left the ankle and traced upward, slow, along the calf and over the knee, and Xerona's skin rose in goosebumps behind her touch like a field of grass bending before a wind. The princess kept her jaw tight, kept still, refused to react, held herself like a wall holds against water, but the wall was cracking.

"You're shaking." - Olivia said.

"I'm cold." - Xerona said.

"No you're not." - Olivia said.

The fingers moved higher, along the inner thigh, and Xerona's legs were spread by the bindings, the angle of the rack leaving her open like a book opened to its center page. Olivia stepped closer, standing between her feet now, and her fingers traced the soft skin of the inner thigh, one side then the other, back and forth, getting higher each pass, and each pass was a question and each pass was a door opening wider.

Xerona's breathing changed. She tried to hide it. Couldn't.

"You're wet, Princess." - Olivia said.

"Shut up." - Xerona said.

Olivia looked down. Xerona's thighs glistened in the torchlight, the wetness catching the light like dew on dark petals, and the elf girl's fingers reached the top of the inner thigh and circled around Xerona's pussy, slow and deliberate, tracing the outer fold, then the other side, then back again, never touching the center, never slipping inside, just circling, round and round, close enough that Xerona could feel the warmth of her fingers like heat from a fire you are not allowed to touch, far enough that it was torture, the kind of torture that makes the body beg even when the mouth will not.

"Olivia..." - Xerona's voice cracked.

"Yes?" - Olivia said.

"Olivia, I..." - Xerona said.

"You what?" - Olivia said.

Xerona's hips moved on their own, pushing up, seeking, the body doing what the pride would not, and the rack's angle made it worse, her pelvis already arched and presented, her thighs trembling, her fingers gripping the ropes at her wrists, her back arching deeper against the wood. Her pussy was swollen, flushed dark against her brown skin, glistening, clenching around nothing, the body speaking a language the mouth refused to speak.

"Tell me what you want." - Olivia said softly.

"I don't want anything." - Xerona said.

"Your body says otherwise." - Olivia said.

Olivia's fingers traced one more circle, close, so close, and Xerona's hips bucked and a sound escaped her throat, small and involuntary, a sound that was not a word but was more honest than any word she had spoken, and she bit down on her lip and turned her head away.

Olivia smiled.

Olivia's other hand landed flat on Xerona's pubic mound, warm palm against trimmed hair, and she pressed down, gentle and firm, not moving, not rubbing, just there, a weight that was not enough and too much at the same time. Her first hand still circled below, fingers tracing the outer folds, never quite touching the center, the two hands working together like a siege, one pressing from above and one circling from below, and Xerona was the city between them, and the walls were falling.

Xerona's stomach clenched. Her hips lifted off the wood.

"Olivia..." - She said.

"Mmm?" - Olivia said.

"Stop teasing." - Xerona said.

"I'm not teasing. I'm resting my hand." - Olivia pressed a little harder with the second hand, the heel of her palm pushing against the swollen flesh beneath it, and Xerona's thighs shook, her pussy dripping now, wetness running down toward the crack of her ass, pooling against the wood of the rack. "See? Just resting." - She said.

"You know what you're doing." - Xerona said.

"Do I?" - Olivia said.

Xerona turned her head and looked at her, eyes half-lidded, lips parted, sweat beading on her forehead like the first rain of a storm, but still that smirk, faint but there, the last flag of a fortress that was already taken.

"You're enjoying this." - Xerona said.

"So are you." - Olivia said.

"I'm tolerating it." - Xerona said.

Olivia laughed, soft and low, the sound like a bell rung once. "Tolerating." - She shifted her first hand, just slightly, her middle finger finding the top of the slit and resting there, not inside, just on it, the second hand pressing down firmer on the mound, and Xerona's whole body went rigid like a string pulled taut. - She said.

"Olivia." - Xerona said.

"Princess." - Olivia said.

"If you don't fuck me in the next thirty seconds I will have your ears clipped." - Xerona said.

Olivia raised an eyebrow. "My ears?" - She said.

"They're pretty. Shame to lose them." - Xerona said.

"That's not very regal of you." - Olivia said.

"Fuck. Me." - Xerona said.

Olivia's finger slipped just barely between the folds, not inside, just resting in the wet heat, and Xerona's hips bucked up against both hands, the ropes groaning, the rack creaking, and her head fell back and a moan pushed through her clenched teeth like steam through a crack.

"Say please." - Olivia whispered.

"Never." - Xerona said.

Olivia's finger slipped inside. Xerona gasped, the sound sharp and raw, and then a second finger, slow and deliberate, the wet heat swallowing them the way the desert swallows rain. Olivia held still for a moment, feeling the princess clench around her, feeling the walls of her pulse.

"Look at that." - Olivia whispered. "So tight." - She said.

"Olivia..." - Xerona said.

"Shh." - Olivia said.

Olivia curled her fingers, upward, slowly, searching, and Xerona's body jerked against the ropes like a fish on a line. There. A small rough patch on the front wall, a place inside her that she had found herself but that no one else had ever touched, and Olivia found it like she had done this a hundred times, like she had a map of Xerona's body in her fingers, and she pressed against it, gently at first, then a little harder.

Xerona's back arched off the rack and a sound came out of her that she didn't recognize, something between a gasp and a cry, a sound that was not pain and was not pleasure but was the place where they meet, and her thighs clamped together as much as the bindings allowed and her toes curled tight.

"Oh," - Olivia said, and her voice was warm and satisfied. "Found it." - She said.

"Olivia. Olivia wait. Wait. Slow down." - Xerona said.

"Why? Am I too much for you?" - She pressed again, rubbed, small circles right on the spot, and Xerona's hips bucked wildly, the rack creaking, the ropes groaning. "You're the princess of Xerol. You rule a city-state. You have servants and guards and an army." - Another circle, and Xerona's mouth fell open. "And right now you can't even form a sentence." - She said.

"I can. I. You. Fuck." - Xerona said.

"That's not a sentence." - Olivia leaned closer, close enough that Xerona could feel her breath on her face, warm and sweet. "You know what I think, Princess? I think I can make you beg." - She said.

"You can't." - Xerona said.

"I already am." - Her fingers worked faster, steady and precise, the wet sounds filling the dungeon like a secret told in the dark. "I think before the night is over you're going to say please. And you're going to mean it." - She said.

"Never." - Xerona said.

"We'll see." - Olivia said.

Olivia worked, slow and methodical, her fingers moving in a steady rhythm, rubbing that spot inside, pressing and circling, while her other hand stayed flat on the mound, a weight and an anchor. No rush. No urgency. Just patience, the kind of patience that is its own kind of cruelty.

Xerona's body responded, her hips rocking against Olivia's hand, her breathing coming in short bursts, her thighs trembling, the ropes creaking as she pulled at her wrists without thinking, her body wanting to grab something, hold something, but the bindings held her still, and the helplessness fed the heat.

"You're close." - Olivia said.

"I'm not." - Xerona said.

"Your pussy is clenching around my fingers. You're close." - Olivia said.

Xerona didn't answer. She couldn't. The pressure was building, low in her stomach, spreading like ink in water, and her back arched deeper and her toes curled and her head pressed back against the wood, and closer, closer, her thighs started to shake and her breath caught and she was right there, right on the edge, her whole body tensed and ready to break like a wave against a seawall.

Olivia stopped.

Xerona's eyes snapped open.

"No." - She said.

Olivia pulled her fingers out, slowly, wet, and held them up so Xerona could see them glistening in the torchlight, the evidence of what she had done and what she had not let finish.

"No no no no no." - Xerona's hips bucked against nothing, her pussy clenching around empty air, her body shaking, the orgasm retreating like a tide pulling back from shore. "Olivia. Olivia please." - She said.

"Please what?" - Olivia said.

"Please. Don't. Stop." - Xerona said.

Olivia smiled. "That sounded close to begging." - She said.

"It wasn't." - Xerona said.

"Say please properly and I'll let you finish." - Olivia said.

"I am a princess. I don't beg." - Xerona said.

Olivia traced one finger along the wet slit, light and teasing, and Xerona's hips jerked.

"Then I guess we wait." - She pulled her hand away entirely. "Until you're ready." - She said.

Olivia slid her fingers back inside, and Xerona's body seized, the wet heat swallowing them easily, and Olivia curled them upward and found the spot again and started the rhythm, slow and steady and methodical, pressing and rubbing and circling.

Xerona's hips moved with her, grinding against her hand, chasing it, her thighs trembling and her stomach tightening, the pressure building again, rising and filling her, spreading through her pelvis and down her thighs and up her spine like a vine growing through her body.

"That's it." - Olivia whispered. "Come on. Get close for me." - She said.

"I'm not... I..." - Xerona said.

"You are. I can feel it. You're clenching again. So tight." - Olivia said.

Olivia worked her fingers, steady, never speeding up, never changing pace, just that same slow deliberate rhythm, pressing the spot, rubbing it, over and over, and Xerona's body climbed, higher and tighter, her breathing coming in short gasps, her back arched, her fingers gripping the ropes, her toes curled, the edge right there, so close, her thighs shaking.

Olivia stopped.

Xerona cried out, a raw and frustrated sound that echoed off the stone walls like a bird hitting glass.

"Olivia!" - She said.

"Mmm?" - Olivia said.

"Please." - Xerona said.

"Please what?" - Olivia said.

"Please let me finish. Please. Please." - Xerona said.

Olivia smiled. "That's three pleases." - She said.

"I don't care. Please. Olivia. Please." - Xerona said.

Olivia pulled her fingers out, held them up, watched Xerona's hips buck against nothing, watched her pussy clench around empty air, watched the princess of Xerol squirm and shake and beg on a dungeon rack, and the sight of it was better than any dream she had ever had.

"Not yet." - Olivia said softly.

"Olivia I swear to the gods if you don't..." - Xerona said.

"You'll what? Clip my ears?" - She traced one finger along the inner thigh. "I think you like this too much to stop me." - She said.

Olivia slid her fingers back inside, one more time, and Xerona's body arched off the rack and a sob broke from her throat, raw and broken.

"Olivia. Please. I can't. I can't take it again." - Xerona said.

"You can." - Olivia said.

Olivia found the spot, pressed into it, started the rhythm, slow and steady and methodical, but this time she didn't stop, and she watched Xerona's face, watched her mouth fall open, watched her eyes roll back, watched her body climb one final time like a wave gathering itself before it breaks.

"Come on, Princess. Give it to me." - Olivia said.

"I'm... I..." - Xerona said.

"Let go." - Olivia said.

Xerona broke.

Her whole body seized, her back arching completely off the rack, her thighs clamping together around Olivia's hand, her pussy clenching hard and spasming around the fingers inside her, and the orgasm ripped through her like a storm through a forest, wave after wave, her hips bucking wildly against Olivia's hand, the ropes groaning, the rack creaking, a sound tearing from her throat that was loud and raw and echoed off the dungeon walls like a cry in a canyon. Her fingers gripped the ropes so hard her knuckles went white and her toes curled tight and her legs shook, and still it came, wave after wave, each one cresting higher than the last.

Olivia didn't stop. She kept rubbing, kept pressing, riding the orgasm with her, extending it, and Xerona's body convulsed, a second wave hitting before the first finished, then a third, wetness gushing around Olivia's fingers, running down her hand, dripping onto the rack, and Xerona's hips jerked uncontrollably, her moans turning to cries, her cries turning to whimpers, the princess of Xerol reduced to sounds that had no words in them.

"Olivia. Olivia. Olivia." - Xerona said, and the name was the only word left in her.

"I'm here." - Olivia said.

"Don't stop. Don't stop. Don't..." - Xerona said.

Olivia kept going, slow and steady, drawing every last tremor out of her the way a musician draws the last note from a string, and Xerona's body shook, her stomach clenched, her thighs quivered, one final wave rolling through her, and then she collapsed back against the wood, breathing hard, chest heaving, sweat covering her brown skin so that she gleamed in the torchlight like something carved and polished, her eyes half closed, her mouth open, her body still twitching with small aftershocks.

Olivia slowly pulled her fingers out, wet, and brought them to her lips and tasted, her tongue moving slowly, her eyes on Xerona's face.

"Sweet." - She said softly.

Xerona lay there, spent, bound, trembling, the cocky princess reduced to a shaking and gasping mess on a dungeon rack, and the dungeon was warm and quiet around them, the torch still burning, the castle still sleeping above, and neither of them moved for a long moment.

Olivia looked down at her, and the princess of Xerol lay spent on the rack, chest heaving, skin glistening, body still twitching, and Olivia brought her wet fingers to her lips again and licked them clean, slow and deliberate, watching Xerona watch her, and the watching was part of it, the way a witness is part of a confession.

"That was just the start." - Olivia said.

Xerona's eyes opened. "What?" - She said.

"The night is long, Princess." - Olivia walked to the small table where the candle sat and picked it up and held it over the rack, the light playing across Xerona's naked body, the shadows moving across her skin like hands. "Your parents are gone for two days. The castle is sleeping. No one knows you're here except me." - She said.

"Olivia..." - Xerona said.

"Shh." - Olivia set the candle back down. She turned to the table of tools and ran her fingers along the row, the way a musician runs their fingers along the keys of an instrument they are about to play. Pinchers. Wooden rod. Leather strap. The feather on a stick. She picked up the feather and turned it over in her hand, the soft filaments catching the light. "You said the rules are twenty-four hours, yes? Whoever finds you can do whatever they want?" - She asked.